

Comparison with young Canada is, it is true, unfair, as the term "Old Country" we have just unwittingly used reminds us. British statesmen are generally not only men of the highest university culture, but men who have also the command of resources which make it comparatively easy for them to keep up their interest in those great questions of history, science and philosophy which are absorbing the attention of the profoundest thinkers and investigators of the day. But despite the tendency to specialization, on the one hand, and to the measurement of everything by the tests of the so-called "practical," on the other, one can hardly help feeling his confidence in a Cabinet Minister, or even an ordinary member of Parliament, increased, when he is reminded that he is also a man given to pondering the great mysteries of life, in its origin and destiny, and is thus keeping himself in touch with the great thinkers and writers of the day.

The latest instance of this characteristic of so many of the foremost British statesmen is given us in the recent address of Lord Salisbury from the Chair of the British Association. The subject upon which he touched with much suggestiveness and felicity of thought—the controversy between the doctrine of Natural Selection of which Darwin was the chief apostle and that of design—though it is familiar, is as far as possible from being threadbare. The irrepressible conflict between the two hypotheses must go on so long as thinkers approach the tremendous question from points of view almost diametrically opposite to each other. Large and tempting as is the theme which, in some one of its many branches, usually supplies the text for these orations—the advance of knowledge, that to which Lord Salisbury directed for a short time the attention of his hearers, the extent of our ignorance, is still vastly more comprehensive and prolific. The student of science may well speak with modest reserve of our knowledge, when he realizes that it is still but an oasis, surrounded on every hand by a vast unexplored region of impenetrable mystery. It avails little to conjure with "that comfortable word evolution" so long as life itself continues to defy imitation and scrutiny. We must await fuller reports of Lord Salisbury's address than are yet to hand before we can speak with confidence with regard to the trend of his thought, but he seems at least to have thrust a keen rapier between some of the loose joints in the armour of Darwinism, as, for instance, when, referring to the statements of some of its defenders that they accept the doctrine of Natural Selection, not because they can demonstrate or even imagine the process in detail, but because all other explanations fail them unless they assume the help of a principle of design, he said that time had brought its revenge when a philosopher prefers to believe that which

can neither be demonstrated nor imagined, rather than run the risk of such a heresy as belief in creative design.

Two or three weeks since, referring to the energetic protests of the Liberal press against the alleged attempts of the Dominion Government and its adherents to purchase constituencies by wholesale, by means of votes for railways, public buildings, etc., on the approach of a general election, we remarked, "The Opposition papers in Ontario retort, with effect, by pointing to the similarly large use of indirect wholesale bribes by the local Government for similar purposes, within the limits of its jurisdiction. Both charges have, there is reason to fear, a great deal too much truth in them." Our attention is now called to a short article in the *Globe* of the 10th inst., in which, after quoting our words, with the exception of the last sentence, which it will be observed, is of a modifying character, the *Globe* says:

"We cannot recall an instance in which the Ontario Government has offered public works in return for votes. We doubt if THE WEEK can specify one such case. We remember that in the contest in Brockville four years ago Mr. Fraser would not announce and would not allow his supporters to announce that a new asylum was to be erected in that constituency. The announcement was not made until after the election. We know that a proposed grant for a bridge in another constituency was withdrawn because it was said the object of the grant was to influence an election. We know that a bridge issue was raised against Mr. Bronson, but the bridge was not promised. We know that more than once the *Globe* has told Ontario constituencies looking for expenditures of public money that the election of the Opposition candidate would not alter the intention of the Government as to any contemplated expenditure. THE WEEK has adopted a charge from the columns of the Tory press for which there is not and never was any justification."

We give the *Globe's* words in full because we like a straightforward denial and are glad to give our readers the full benefit of it. We may say, in passing, that the *Globe* has, for some time past, adopted a manly and not uncourteous way of dealing with such matters which does it honour and entitles its strictures to attention. With respect to our own part, we might, were we disposed to put it in that way, point out that the charges specified by the *Globe* only to be denied, of themselves go far to justify our statement, as modified by the sentence which should have been, we think, included in the *Globe's* quotation. But we do not wish to shield ourselves in that way. We admit frankly that THE WEEK cannot specify, with such proof as would be accepted by the *Globe*, a single case in which the Ontario Government has offered public works in return for votes. We have not sought for such proof. Perhaps it could not be found. Moreover, had

we sought and found it, it would not have altered the fact that at the time we quoted the familiar charge, we had not the evidence in a specific case before us. Perhaps it was wrong to repeat such a charge without such evidence. But then, we doubt if the *Globe* can specify a case in which the Dominion Government, as such, "has offered public works in return for votes." That is not exactly the way in which such things are done.

This, however, may seem a little too much like beating about the bush. THE WEEK is independent and aims at being impartial, but does not believe that either independence or impartiality consists in asserting or assuming that one government and one party are just as bad as the other. It believes in discrimination, and a just discrimination requires that full credit should be given to either government and either party for whatever of special merit belongs to it. Though our words may have seemed to imply it, we do not believe that, in the particular matter of trying to influence the votes of constituencies by a skilful placing of public appropriations where they will do most towards keeping the party in power, the Ontario Government has sinned as has the Ottawa Government. Nor has its management of the public funds given rise to any scandals to be compared with those which have been the subject of special investigation at Ottawa during the last two or three sessions. We give Mr. Mowat's administration full credit for its cleaner record in this respect. At the same time, we are not sure that in the skilful use of Government patronage for the promotion of party ends, the Local Government could not give points even to that of the Dominion. We are unable to see any clear distinction in principle between a partisan use of public patronage and a partisan appropriation of public funds. Whatever difference there may be is in degree rather than kind. The one is a trust for the benefit of the whole people as much as the other.

TIPPING AND BRIBING.

Just now it is Montreal's turn to have on hand an investigation touching the honesty of civic officials. Like New York and Brooklyn and many other places of less note, the integrity of her police and detectives is in doubt. Evidence published in the *Star* seems to put it almost beyond question that there has been gross inefficiency in the administration of the Police Department, and especially that the detectives in that department have been, at times, singularly unable to discover clues to crime, or to find suspected criminals, until their eyes were first opened by the application of a magic salve, in the shape of a bank note or a golden coin.

We do not refer to the matter, however, to pronounce a verdict upon the cases of